

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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RED TAPE CUT FOR BREEDERS OF ENDANGERED SPECIES

Zoos, game bird breeders, circuses, and other persons who breed and raise endangered species in captivity can now buy and sell certain of these animals in foreign and interstate commerce under a new rulemaking issued by Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Associate Director Keith M. Schreiner, announced today.

The regulations, published in the June 1, 1977, Federal Register, relax restrictions and permit procedures for qualified breeders of endangered species which are designated as captive, self-sustaining populations (CSSP's). The rulemaking determines that 11 endangered species of large cats, birds, and primates exist in this country as stable, separate populations from the wild, capable of perpetuating themselves in captivity. These populations, which are now classified as threatened, include the tiger, leopard, jaguar, ring-tailed lemur, black lemur, brown eared pheasant, Edward's pheasant, Humes pheasant (bar-tailed pheasant), Mikad pheasant, Palawan peacock pheasant, Swinhoe pheasant.

Sixteen species were proposed for CSSP status but the Service has decided not to list any native endangered species under this category. Such treatment would seriously weaken their protection, since unlawfully captured wild animals could be falsely described as belonging to a CSSP. Import controls minimize the possibility of such deception with exotic species. The Service has also decided not to list the white eared

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pheasant as a CSSP because available data indicate there are only 48 specimens in captivity. Its status will be reconsidered if additional data are submitted.

"Breeders play a vital role in the conservation of endangered species," Schreiner said. "The new rule reduces regulation of their activities and relieves them of undue paperwork, delays, and a cumbersome permit procedure. The combination of these factors has hindered efficient use of some species and has lead to over-population at some breeding compounds and a dire need for the same species at others."

Schreiner said the Service will retain some controls in order to monitor the status of captive animals and to guard against their death or loss of reproductive ability. Regulation is also necessary so that species taken from the wild are not passed off as stock from CSSP's.

The rulemaking also makes permits available for three new actions involving all endangered or threatened species held in captivity. The actions--euthanasia, relocation, and conservation exhibition of surplus stock--may be permitted under certain circumstances as "activities that enhance the survival of the species." This term is explained in the newly revised regulations, which take effect immediately.

Reclassification of the species to CSSP status allows permits for a wider range of activities including taking, exportation, and interstate commerce in the course of a commercial activity. The CSSP permit, obtained with one application and valid for 2 years, can authorize a single or a series of transactions or unlimited activities with these animals. The simplified permit procedure makes it unnecessary, as in the past, to apply for separate permits for each activity and each specimen.

The paper work burden has been reduced by eliminating, in most cases, the requirement for annual written reports. Instead, permit holders are to report transactions on a new multi-copy form to be provided by the Service. The form serves as a sales receipt, or proof of acquisition or disposition for the buyer and seller. At the same time, it indicates that the animals were not taken from the wild.

Data from the CSSP reporting form will enable the Service to monitor the status of captive animals of certain species in the United States and to ensure that they continue to reproduce well in captivity.

The Service will consider moving other captive endangered species to CSSP status when sufficient evidence warrants the action, Schreiner said.

Additional information on the rule and permit procedures may be obtained from the Federal Wildlife Permit Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240 (telephone 202/634-1496).